

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 NEW DE 10720 131203Z
ACTION SS-25

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P R 131050Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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S E C R E T NEW DELHI 10720

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, IN, US
SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S CALL ON INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY
MEHTA

1. UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR
GOHEEN, DEPTOFF AND EMBOFF, CALLED ON FONSEC JAGAT MEHTA
JULY 12. ALSO PRESENT WAS AMBASSADOR BAJPAI, SECRETARY
(WEST), MEA. MOST OF CONVERSATION DEVOTED TO AFGHANISTAN
AND PAKISTAN.

2. AFGHANISTAN. MEHTA, WHO VISITED KABUL JUNE 22 - 23,
DESCRIBED NEW AFGHAN LEADERS AS "PROFESSIONALS" AND WAS
STRUCK BY THEIR SINCERITY. ON OTHER HAND, MANY FIGURES
FURTHER ON DOWN IN THE LEADERSHIP ARE INEXPERIENCED. TWO
MAJOR IMPRESSIONS EMERGED FROM HIS TALKS WITH TARAKI AND
OTHERS. FIRST, FIRST, THE AFGHANS EMPHASIZED THAT THEY MADE
THEIR OWN REVOLUTION AND WILL BECOME NO COUNTRY'S
SATELLITE. SECOND, THE DRA'S FIRST PRIORITY IS QUICK ECONOMIC
REFORM.

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3. IN MEHTA'S VIEW, DRA IS ANXIOUS FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS
WITH ALL COUNTRIES. THERE IS AWARENESS OF ALARM WHICH
COUP AROUSED IN CERTAIN QUARTERS, PARTICULARLY IN
PAKISTAN AND IRAN. INDIA HAD NO REGRETS ABOUT BEING THE
FIRST COUNTRY IN THE REGION TO RECOGNIZE THE DRA AND WILL
CONTINUE ITS ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH AFGHANISTAN. INDIAN

TECHNICAL PERSONNEL WORKING IN AFGHANISTAN HAD ENCOUNTERED NO PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW REGIME.

4. IN RESPONSE TO NEWSOM'S QUESTION, MEHTA SAID THAT THE DURAND LINE ISSUE HAD BEEN AN IMPORTANT ONE IN PAKISTAN-AFGHAN RELATIONS FOR MANY YEARS. TARAKI ACKNOWLEDGED TO HIM THAT THIS WAS A PROBLEM BUT IS NOT A TOP PRIORITY FOR THE NEW REGIME. WHILE THE AFGHANS FEEL THEY HAVE A FRIEND IN THE SOVIET UNION, MEHTA NOTED THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN IN A SPECIAL POSITION IN AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE DAYS OF THE MONARCHY. SOME OF THE AFGHAN-SOVIET AGREEMENTS NOW BEING SIGNED WERE IN THE PIPELINE EVEN BEFORE THE COUP. MR. NEWSOM AGREED BUT NOTED THAT THE INCREASE IN SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS WAS A CAUSE FOR SOME CONCERN. IN HIS MEETING IN KABUL HE HOPES TO DETERMINE HOW U.S. CAN PROVIDE EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE TO THE AFGHANS. NEWSOM SAID THAT HE GATHERED THAT MEHTA HAD FOUND NO BIAS IN AFGHANISTAN AGAINST COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. MEHTA AGREED BUT ADDED THAT AFGHANS HAVE THEIR OWN SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW THE BALANCE AMONG CONTENDING FORCES IN THE COUNTRY WILL WORK OUT. NEWSOME REMARKED THAT, DESPITE THEIR APPREHENSIONS, THE CURRENT ATTITUDE OF THE IRANIANS TOWARD AFGHANISTAN WAS ESSENTIALLY CLOSE TO THAT OF THE U.S. AND INDIA. THE IRANIANS SEEM TO BE WILLING TO GIVE THE NEW REGIME THE BENEFIT OF THE SECRET

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DOUBT.

5. PAKISTAN. MEHTA SAID INDIA WOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY BILATERAL TROUBLES BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN. IMPROVED RELATIONS AMONG COUNTRIES IN THE REGION WILL BENEFIT EACH COUNTRY AND SHOULD NOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF ANY ONE. AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO SET BACK THIS PROCESS. HE NOTED ALSO THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN HAD CREATED NO PROBLEMS FOR TRADE AND TRANSIT OF INDIAN GOODS THROUGH PAKISTAN TO AFGHANISTAN.

6. NEWSOM SAID THE U.S. HOPES THE REPROCESSING ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED WITH PAKISTAN IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PERMIT MORE NORMAL BILATERAL RELATIONS. MEHTA RESPONDED THAT FOR ITS PART, INDIA WANTS TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. THIS WOULD BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, INDIAN MUST BE CAREFUL IN THIS NORMALIZATION PROCESS NOT TO BE OVER-ZEALOUS. TOO MANY OVERTURES FROM INDIA COULD EMBARRASS THE GOP.

7. MEHTA COMMENTED THAT INDIA HAS BEEN SILENT ON THE

GOP REPROCESSING FACILITY. IT WAS "TRICKY" FOR THE GOI TO RAISE REPROCESSING IN ANOTHER COUNTRY GIVEN INDIA'S OWN CAPABILITIES IN THIS FIELD. INDIA HAD UNILATERALLY RENOUNCED DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BUT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO DISCUSS A PACT WITH PAKISTAN. IT IS ONE THING TO MAKE A UNILATERAL DECLARATION AND QUITE ANOTHER TO INSTITUTIONALIZE IT, PARTICULARLY SINCE OTHER QUESTIONS ARE INVOLVED. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO REASON WHY PAKISTAN SHOULD NOT TAKE GOI RENUNCIATION SERIOUSLY.

8. OTHER SUBJECTS. UNDER SECRETARY SAID PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE WORK OF THE FIVE NATION-GROUP ON NAMIBIA WERE GOOD. THE U.S. HOPES
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INDIA WILL SUPPORT CONTACT GROUP'S PLAN WHEN IT COMES BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL. HE ALSO NOTED THAT PUERTO RICAN QUESTION COMES BEFORE THE UNGA COMMITTEE OF 24 SOON AND HOPED THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL MAINTAIN CONTACT ON THIS ISSUE. ADDITIONALLY, THE USG AND THE GOI SHOULD STAY IN TOUCH ON THE HUM RIGHTS COMMISSION SEMINAR TO BE HELD IN GENEVA IN SEPTEMBER.

9. TURKEY. IN A BRIEF SEPARATE CONVERSATION BEFORE CURRENT VISIT TO TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER OKUN TO INDIA. THE TURKS HAD SAID THEY DETECTED SOME DOUBTS IN WASHINGTON ABOUT PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT'S RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW. OKUN EXPLAINED NEED TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONS WITH USSR AND BELIEVES AMERICAN VIEWS ON SOVIET EXPANSIONISM ARE EXAGGERATED. BAJPAI ALSO SAID THAT THE TURKS WANT THE AREA COVERED BY THE MBFR TALKS TO BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THEIR REGION. NEWSOM SAID THAT U.S. TALKS WITH ECEVIT IN WASHINGTON DURING THE NATO SUMMIT WERE VERY SATISFACTORY. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT THERE WAS NOT QUESTION OF LINKAGE BETWEEN A SALT AGREEMENT AND SOVIET ACTIONS IN OTHER SPHERES. HOWEVER, SUCH VENTS AS THE SCHARANSKY TRIAL DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO A GOOD CLIMATE FOR THESE TALKS.
GOHEEN

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